

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 07814

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CONS, CN, UR
SUBJECT: CANADIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS STALLED
REF: (A) MOSCOW 02428, (B) MOSCOW 5740

1. IN HIS CALL ON MFA FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER KORNIYENKO
APRIL 12 TO PRESENT THE DEMARCHE OF THE FIVE ON NAMIBIA
(SEPTEL), CANADIAN AMBASSADOR FORD TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO
DISCUSS BILATERAL RELATIONS SINCE HE HAD BEEN UNSUCCESS-
FULLY TRYING FOR SEVERAL WEEKS TO SEE KORNIYENKO ON THE
SUBJECT. FORD FOUND THE SOVIET VERY COOL AND NONCOMMITTAL
TO EXPRESSIONS OF HOPE FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS WHICH FORD
TOLD KORNIYENKO THAT OTTAWA WISHED HIM TO CONVEY TO THE
SOVIETS. FORD POINTED TO A RECENT UPBEAT STATEMENT ALONG
THESE LINES BY TRUDEAU, BUT KORNIYENKO RESPONDED THAT THE
SOVIETS WOULD NEED MORE THAN THAT TO IMPROVE RELATIONS.
KORNIYENKO ADDED THAT IF THE CANADIANS WANTED TO TAKE STEPS
TO BETTER RELATIONS, THEY WOULD FIND THE SOVIETS WOULD
GIVE A POSITIVE RESPONSE.

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2. MEANWHILE AT A LOWER LEVEL THERE IS AN INDICATION THAT
THE CANADIANS HAVE ANOTHER PROBLEM BREWING WITH THE
SOVIETS WHICH COULD FURTHER SOUR THE ATMOSPHERE. IN EARLY
JANUARY MRS. ASTA MARIA SOKHOV, A CANADIAN CITIZEN BORN
IN THE USSR, WAS ARRESTED FOR SMUGGLING AT MOSCOW AIRPORT
AS SHE TRIED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY WITH A LARGE AMOUNT OF
JEWELRY GIVEN HER BY RELATIVES AND FRIENDS PLUS SOME

SOVIET GRADUATION CERTIFICATES. UNTIL RECENTLY IT LOOKED LIKE THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES WERE TREATING IT AS A SIMPLE CRIMINAL CASE. HOWEVER, THE PERIOD OF INVESTIGATION WHICH WAS TO HAVE ENDED SOON, WAS EXTENDED UNTIL MAY AND MRS. SOKHOV HAS BEEN UNDER MORE INTENSIVE QUESTIONING OF LATE. THE QUESTIONING HAS LATELY FOCUSED ON TWO APPEARANCES WHICH SHE MADE ON CBC RADIO PROGRAMS (SOKHOV SPEAKS FLUENT RUSSIAN) AND TO A VISIT SHE MADE TO A PRIEST WHILE ON HER VISIT HERE. THE CANADIAN EMBASSY SUSPECTS THE SOVIETS MAY BE TRYING TO MAKE A CASE FOR SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES.

3. COMMENT: IT WOULD SEEM THAT RELATIONS REMAIN AT A DEAD POINT AND THAT NEITHER SIDE IS INTERESTED IN A DRAMATIC MOVE TO IMPROVE THEM. THE SOVIETS HAVE IT IN THEIR POWER TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE BY EITHER TURNING THE SOKHOV CASE INTO A SPY AFFAIR OR BY EXPELLING SOME CANADIAN DIPLOMATS IN RETALIATION. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT USA AND CANADA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR GEORGIY ARBATOV WILL BE GOING TO A PUGHWASH CONFERENCE IN TORONTO MAY 4-7 AND THAT HE HAS BEEN INVITED TO ALBERTA, OTTAWA AND MONTREAL AS A GUEST OF THE GOC MAY 7-17. ALTHOUGH ARBATOV WILL BE A USEFUL INTERLOCUTOR FOR THE CANADIANS, THIS IS NOT THE KIND OR LEVEL OF VISIT WHICH COULD SERVE AS A SYMBOL OF EITHER SIDE'S WILLINGNESS TO LET BYGONES BE BYGONES.

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4. THE CANADIANS HERE ARE NOT AT ALL SURE THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE DECIDED NOT TO RETALIATE FOR THE EXPULSIONS. FOR OUR PART WE NOTE THAT THE SITUATION IS SIMILAR TO ONE IN WHICH THE NORWEGIANS FOUND THEMSELVES A YEAR AGO. FOLLOWING A NORWEGIAN EXPULSION OF SEVERAL SOVIETS FOR SPYING, THE SOVIETS WAITED UNTIL SUMMER AND TOLD THE NORWEGIANS THAT A FIRST SECRETARY (WHO WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE) WAS EXPELLED AND THAT A SECOND WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO THE USSR. (THE SECOND INDIVIDUAL HAD BEEN REASSIGNED TO PEKING TWELVE MONTHS BEFORE.) WHETHER THE SOVIETS INTEND TO FOLLOW THIS PRECEDENT IS ANYONE'S GUESS, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE CANADIANS HAVE WARNED THE SOVIETS THAT ANY RETALIATION WOULD CAUSE A STRONG CANADIAN REACTION (REF A). TOON

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